

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :  
 :  
THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF : NTSB Accident No.  
THE COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001  
OCTOBER 1, 2015 :  
 :  
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Interview of: JAMES WALKER

Thursday,  
December 3, 2015

Residence Inn  
Jacksonville, Florida

BEFORE:

CARRIE BELL, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio  
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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MIKE RICHARDS, NTSB

## PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE INTERVIEWEE:

GIL FELTEL, ESQ., Tanner Bishop

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:07 p.m.

MS. BELL: So I thank you all for being here today. I'm Carrie Bell. I am an investigator with the NTSB. I am the Human Performance Group chairman for this accident.

And today is December 3, 2015. We are in the Residence Inn in Jacksonville, Florida. And today our interview is in regard to the El Faro accident.

We'll be interviewing Mr. James Walker. Mr. Walker, can you spell your name for the record?

MR. WALKER: J-A-M-E-S W-A-L-K-E-R.

MS. BELL: Also present, we'll go around the room.

MR. STETTLER: My name's Jeff Stettler with the U.S. Coast Guard, civilian.

MR. GRUBER: Tom Gruber, ABS.

MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Patty Finsterbusch, TOTE services.

MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB.

MR. PETERSON: Lee Peterson. I'm the TOTE party coordinator.

MS. SERRIDGE: Melissa Serridge, TOTE services.

LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast

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1 Guard.

2 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett, Coast Guard,  
3 civilian.

4 MR. STOLZENBERG: Eric Stolzenberg, NTSB  
5 naval architecture.

6 LCDR [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] Coast  
7 Guard.

8 MS. BELL: And on the line we've got two  
9 NTSB investigators and a TOTE employee. So we'll start  
10 with Mike Kucharski.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Good afternoon, everyone.  
12 Mr. Walker, this is Mike Kucharski, NTSB investigator  
13 and group chairman of the Nautical Operations Group.

14 MR. FURUKAWA: And Jon Furukawa, group  
15 chairman for Survival Factors.

16 MS. BELL: Kevin?

17 MR. STITH: This is Kevin Stith with TOTE  
18 services nautical operations group.

19 MR. FELTEL: Gilbert Feltel, Tanner Bishop  
20 law firm, as Mr. Walker's personal representative.

21 MS. BELL: And just for you guys on the  
22 phone if you don't mind getting close to the speaker  
23 when you talk. We've got a kind of big room and so  
24 it's kind of hard to hear.

25 So, the NTSB is an independent federal

1 agency charged with determining the probable cause of  
2 transportation accidents and promoting transportation  
3 safety.

4 We're not part of the Department of  
5 Transportation or the U.S. Coast Guard. We don't have  
6 any regulatory or enforcement powers.

7 The purpose of our investigation is to  
8 increase the safety, not to assign fault, blame, or  
9 liability.

10 We can't offer any guarantee of  
11 confidentiality or immunity from legal or license  
12 actions. We would like to record our interview to  
13 ensure an accurate record. Do you have any objections  
14 to us recording the interview?

15 MR. WALKER: No, not at all.

16 MS. BELL: Okay. So, a transcript will be  
17 sent to you after the interview is complete and we get  
18 that back. So you can review that and if there are any  
19 mistakes that need to be corrected you can do that at  
20 that time. And then it will go into the public record.

21 You are allowed to have one representative  
22 of your choice and you have that. He cannot testify  
23 for you, but if you have questions, feel free to ask  
24 those questions privately and we'll get right back to  
25 it.

1           If you have any questions at all about -- or  
2 any kind of clarification you need from us please feel  
3 free to ask if we ask a question you don't understand.

4           You can modify any statement that you make  
5 on the record if you misspeak.

6           So, if you don't have any questions we'll go  
7 ahead and get started.

8           MR. WALKER: No, I'm ready.

9           MS. BELL: Okay. Could you give us a brief  
10 description of your background in the marine industry?

11          MR. WALKER: I've been sailing for 34 years,  
12 or just over 33 years. All of it -- most of it in deck  
13 department. I've been sailing bosun for 12 years now.  
14 That's a supervisor in the deck department.

15          I've been in all weathers. I've been in  
16 fires, involved in fires. I've got commendation  
17 letters for fires I've fought in.

18          And I take care of the maintenance of the  
19 vessel now. I have been a watch stander in the past.  
20 I've stood watches on the bridges, but it's been quite  
21 a few years.

22          Now it's maintenance. Now I'm in charge of  
23 maintenance and I know how to do the maintenance on the  
24 ship.

25          MS. BELL: How long have you been with TOTE?

1 MR. WALKER: I would have to look that up.  
2 I would say four to five years.

3 MS. BELL: And before that who were you  
4 with?

5 MR. WALKER: I've been with a number of  
6 companies. OSI, Maersk, Energy Transportation,  
7 Waterman, the American Hawaii Cruise, Sealand. That's  
8 all I can recall. I can't recall back in the eighties.

9 MS. BELL: Okay. And so you've been with --  
10 since the time you started with TOTE you've been a  
11 bosun the entire time?

12 MR. WALKER: Yes. I was hired first as --  
13 my only job has been bosun.

14 MS. BELL: Okay. And how were you hired?  
15 Did you go through an interview process?

16 MR. WALKER: No, it's through the union the  
17 job goes on an open board and whoever's got the best  
18 registration card, or even if the best registration  
19 card doesn't want it the next person down, the next  
20 person down, and I just happened to be there and had  
21 the card that got the job.

22 MS. BELL: And which ships are you working  
23 on, or have you worked on?

24 MR. WALKER: I've done 60-day relief on the  
25 El Yunque back about 10 years ago. And then I was

1 bosun on the El Morro. I can't recall the dates.

2 I originally started on the El Morro. I was  
3 on the El Morro until 17 days before they scrapped it.  
4 They took me off for about -- I believe it was 17 days  
5 and transferred me over to the El Faro.

6 MS. BELL: And about how long are your  
7 contracts? How long are you on the ship?

8 MR. WALKER: I'm on the ship four months on,  
9 two months off.

10 And that's not exact because the ship is on  
11 a weekly schedule. So it's as close to 120 days  
12 without going over. So it was usually about 119 --  
13 between 116 and 119 days on, and then it would be up to  
14 like 63 days off.

15 And one time I got off on -- for two weeks  
16 on a medical. And that was actually two months before  
17 the accident. I had a kidney stone. I had to get off  
18 for two weeks, got better, came right back to work.

19 MS. BELL: And as part of your duties as a  
20 bosun are you the ship's chairperson for the SIU?

21 MR. WALKER: Yes, ma'am. I'm the union  
22 representative on the vessel.

23 MS. BELL: And have you been since you  
24 started with TOTE? Or has that changed?

25 MR. WALKER: No, no. I have been. I was --



1 as long as I've been a member with the ships as bosun I  
2 am the union representative.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. So, I don't have a  
4 maritime background so I'm going to ask you to walk me  
5 through a regular day. What you do, your typical  
6 duties on a regular day. Just pretend like I'm a new  
7 crew member and just tell me what you do.

8 MR. WALKER: I dole out the maintenance  
9 jobs, the deck maintenance jobs to the deck department  
10 personnel that are working, either overtime workers or  
11 the day men that work their regular eight hours as day  
12 workers.

13 And I was a hands-on worker. I didn't just  
14 supervise, I actually worked with the men. We did the  
15 chipping, painting, cleaning, pressure washing. I  
16 repaired the deck tools, the pneumatic tools. Ordered  
17 paint, lubricants.

18 Anytime we needed tools I would put together  
19 a list and turn it in to the chief officer. He would  
20 go over the list, put in an order.

21 When we got the order I would supervise and  
22 help bring the pallets up by crane onto the deck and we  
23 would put the whatever supplies came on we brought on  
24 and we put away.

25 And all hands, my job was on the bow,

1 undocking the ship, running the winches. Running a  
2 winch. There's three different winches and I ran one.

3 I went around and secured all the trunks on  
4 deck 2. I made sure that all the equipment was tied  
5 down a la the trash cans, the dumpsters, the gear that  
6 was in the angle (phonetic) \*7:05:44 stow, make sure  
7 that it was strapped down properly.

8 Because you don't want movement. You don't  
9 want even an empty barrel, you don't want it moving.  
10 The paint lockers, the paint cans. Everything is tied,  
11 everything is secured. And that was part of my job was  
12 making sure things were properly secured.

13 The crane is always put back into a secured  
14 position. That's my job.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. Is there anything  
16 different that you do underway? What are your underway  
17 duties?

18 MR. WALKER: That would be it. I assign  
19 maintenance jobs to the day men.

20 Chipping and painting would be assigned to  
21 the overtime workers, the watch standers that wanted to  
22 work overtime. They normally got the pneumatic tools  
23 and chipped rust, or painted the bare steel. When the  
24 rust was chipped and you're down to bare steel they  
25 would paint that. That was their jobs.

1           The day men, their jobs were the  
2 maintenance. I'm a day worker so I did the same  
3 maintenance with them.

4           MS. BELL: Okay. And about how many people  
5 are you supervising?

6           MR. WALKER: Six to seven. One of the men  
7 would work for me sometimes and sometimes he would work  
8 with the engine department.

9           MS. BELL: Okay. I'll just go around and  
10 see if anyone has questions about background or what  
11 we've talked about so far. Anyone have questions or  
12 clarifications to be made? Keith?

13           MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett with the Coast  
14 Guard. So you doled out the jobs. And who gave you  
15 out the list of work that needed to be performed so  
16 that you could give the jobs to your men?

17           MR. WALKER: The chief officer. I work  
18 directly under the chief officer.

19           MR. FAWCETT: And how would the chief  
20 officer give you those jobs? Would he give you a list?

21           MR. WALKER: With maintenance, preventive  
22 maintenance we have a list. It's usually four to five  
23 pages of preventive maintenance that has to be done  
24 monthly. And those jobs we doled out, I doled out to  
25 the day men to do each, you know, every day you do a

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1 different maintenance job. Greasing the winches.  
2 Slushing the wires. Greasing the watertight doors.

3 The mate would have a list of -- written  
4 list of chipping, painting, anything -- or pressure  
5 washing. Any jobs like that he would have either a  
6 written list or tell me verbally and I would write on  
7 my own little piece of paper that I could give out  
8 those jobs during the day.

9 But he always -- I worked directly under  
10 him. We would walk the decks and see where rust was,  
11 or where there was a buildup of dirt, where it needed  
12 to be cleaned. Where things needed to be repaired.

13 And he would tell me. I would either write  
14 it down, he would write it down, or just by memory I  
15 know when certain things have to be done.

16 Certain things have to be done immediately  
17 before we get into port. I know that. I get them  
18 done.

19 MR. FAWCETT: And just to be clear, you got  
20 off the ship for a couple of weeks for a kidney stone  
21 issue, medical issue.

22 MR. WALKER: Yes.

23 MR. FAWCETT: And then you rejoined the  
24 vessel?

25 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

1 MR. FAWCETT: And then approximately when  
2 did you sign off the El Faro the last time?

3 MR. WALKER: My last day on the El Faro was  
4 September 15.

5 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. During that voyage  
6 where you had the medical incident do you recall any  
7 major jobs that you did that weren't on the preventive  
8 maintenance list?

9 MR. WALKER: No. Our work was -- we were --  
10 the last month or so before I got off we were getting  
11 the ship Alaska-ready. The ship was due to take over  
12 the Tacoma, Washington to Anchorage, Alaska run.

13 And we were -- they were adding 12 winches I  
14 believe it was and fairleads for the winches. And we  
15 were chipping a lot of rust and getting the surfaces  
16 ready for the winches to either be bolted down or  
17 welded down.

18 And that was a major project for us, that we  
19 were chipping a lot and getting the ship Alaska-ready.

20 MR. FAWCETT: So, you left the ship on  
21 September 5. Do you recall --

22 MR. WALKER: Fifteenth.

23 MR. FAWCETT: Fifteenth, that's right. Do  
24 you recall when you joined approximately? Beginning  
25 of?

1 MR. WALKER: Approximately May 14.

2 MR. FAWCETT: And I'm sure we'll revisit  
3 this topic, but there was a Polish riding gang aboard.

4 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

5 MR. FAWCETT: Did they ever work for you, or  
6 were you ever involved with their work? You know, to  
7 help them get their work done.

8 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir. They were there, I  
9 believe they were there to get the ship Alaska-ready.

10 When they would weld something, or cut  
11 something and it was bare steel it was my job to get  
12 that covered with paint. We don't leave bare metal.  
13 It has to be covered with coats of paint.

14 So I did -- when they finished jobs I was  
15 told that this was finished and to paint it.

16 Actually helping them, I did not. I watched  
17 them. I prepped surfaces for them. I got to watch  
18 them work, do a lot of their work, but that was it. I  
19 was not their worker. I didn't help them.

20 If they needed something they could ask.  
21 They really didn't come to me for tools. They didn't  
22 come to me for anything really.

23 It was pretty much painting. When they  
24 welded the new steel for the new winch controls I got  
25 somebody down there, I doled out the job, gave them --

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1 made up the paint and had that new metal painted.

2 MR. FAWCETT: So, let's say you were using  
3 the stores crane or something like that. If they were  
4 around did they ever work for you?

5 MR. WALKER: No, sir.

6 MR. FAWCETT: There was like a clearcut line  
7 between the labor gangs?

8 MR. WALKER: Well, yes, it was clear that  
9 they were there for this job. And their job really --  
10 the only place where our jobs came together was  
11 preparing the surfaces.

12 MR. FAWCETT: Was the same Polish crew on  
13 there the whole time you were on there?

14 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir. Some of them may  
15 have changed out. I can't remember faces. I remember  
16 most of them stayed the same. I think they actually  
17 added one at some point, but I didn't keep track of  
18 them at all.

19 I do remember the one old guy because he was  
20 pretty old, but he seemed --

21 MR. FAWCETT: Was he older than me?

22 MR. WALKER: I don't know. He -- probably  
23 close to the same age. From what I observed they were  
24 all really good workers. They definitely work.

25 MR. FAWCETT: And did you eat with them in

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1 the crew's mess? Not you personally, but they eat in  
2 the crew's mess with your crew, your guys?

3 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

4 MR. FAWCETT: And could you talk to them  
5 about, you know, traveling, or sports? Could you carry  
6 on a conversation?

7 MR. WALKER: No, sir.

8 MR. FAWCETT: Why was that?

9 MR. WALKER: They didn't speak English, or  
10 if they did they didn't speak it well enough for me to  
11 understand. And I really didn't make an effort.

12 MR. FAWCETT: Do you know if they read? You  
13 know, could they read English?

14 MR. WALKER: I don't know.

15 MR. FAWCETT: Thanks very much.

16 MR. WALKER: You're welcome.

17 MS. BELL: This is Carrie. So, just to  
18 follow up on that, you didn't really communicate with  
19 them much at all? You knew what you needed to have  
20 prepared for them. How did you know what needed to be  
21 prepared?

22 MR. WALKER: The extra chief engineer that  
23 was onboard the ship, Jeff Mathias I believe his name  
24 was, he pointed out early on where these winches were  
25 to go, what needed to be -- how the surface was to be

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1 prepared.

2 And the chief officer, or even -- even  
3 though I don't work for the chief engineer, if the  
4 chief engineer came to me and told me that this metal  
5 was new I knew it had to be painted and I got it  
6 painted.

7 MS. BELL: So, who communicated with them,  
8 do you know?

9 MR. WALKER: The chief engineers.

10 MS. BELL: Okay.

11 MR. WALKER: I don't -- I can't say. I  
12 don't know which chief engineer. But it was an  
13 engineer.

14 MS. BELL: Okay.

15 MR. WALKER: They worked for the  
16 engineering.

17 MS. BELL: So if you ever had to tell them  
18 something -- was there anytime where you might have had  
19 to relay a message to them? And if so, how would you  
20 do that?

21 MR. WALKER: No, it didn't come up.

22 MS. SERRIDGE: This is Melissa Serridge. Do  
23 you know if one of the individuals spoke -- was kind of  
24 like the lead person and spoke, you know, a little bit  
25 better English than maybe the other Polish workers?

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1 MR. WALKER: No, I don't know.

2 MR. GRUBER: Tom Gruber from ABS. Just two  
3 things going back.

4 You said one of your responsibilities was  
5 prepping the vessel for Alaska. And where they were  
6 getting ready to add winches.

7 Had the winches been added, or were you just  
8 prepping the foundations? Could you explain?

9 MR. WALKER: I believe four of the winches  
10 were actually mounted.

11 MR. GRUBER: And then your work with the  
12 riding crew you said was painting any exposed steel  
13 that they had worked on.

14 Do you know what kind of modifications they  
15 were doing there?

16 MR. WALKER: They added a winch control at  
17 the large opening on the starboard side. Forward of  
18 that large opening on the starboard side they added a  
19 winch control and a steel -- I believe a 6-inch steel  
20 guard to guard the winch control.

21 MR. GRUBER: Thank you, sir.

22 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett. Just following  
23 up on the Polish gang that was onboard.

24 Ms. Serridge brought up a point that there  
25 might have been somebody aboard to act as an

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1 interpreter, translator, or something like that.

2 But what I want to focus on is what your  
3 experiences were. You attended drills aboard the ship,  
4 correct?

5 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

6 MR. FAWCETT: Did you attend abandon ship  
7 drills?

8 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

9 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Describe to me from  
10 your viewpoint where the Polish crew was, how they were  
11 addressed, and how they were dealt with.

12 MR. WALKER: I don't know.

13 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So when they had the  
14 abandon ship drill did the crew all muster for the  
15 purposes of the drill at one boat or the other boat?

16 MR. WALKER: They were split. You have boat  
17 1 and boat 2. So many crew members went to boat 1. So  
18 many crew members went to boat 2. My boat was boat  
19 number 2. And it was all crew.

20 MR. FAWCETT: Okay, so I realize you're the  
21 bosun. Did you ever see any instructions for emergency  
22 procedures written in the Polish language?

23 MR. WALKER: No, sir.

24 MR. FAWCETT: Did you ever participate in a  
25 -- I realize that people come onboard the ship and they

1 get this safety orientation. Did you ever take part or  
2 witness a safety orientation for one of the Polish crew  
3 members?

4 MR. WALKER: No, sir.

5 MR. FAWCETT: If the crew musters at the  
6 port boat which is the vessel with the diesel engine,  
7 correct?

8 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

9 MR. FAWCETT: Who musters at the starboard  
10 boat to handle those unfamiliar with seafaring, such as  
11 ship riders, Polish riding gang. Who helps them on the  
12 starboard side?

13 MR. WALKER: I don't know.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Was this ever discussed at  
15 safety meetings?

16 MR. WALKER: Not that I -- as I said before,  
17 with the lifeboats half the crew or certain crew  
18 members went to boat 1, certain crew members went to  
19 boat 2. That's how we're assigned our jobs.

20 As far as riders are concerned I don't know  
21 where they mustered.

22 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. In boat 2 while you  
23 were aboard were there any personnel in that boat that  
24 were not ship's crew members?

25 MR. WALKER: No.

1           MR. FAWCETT: And at the safety meetings  
2 that you witnessed were the Polish riding gang in  
3 attendance at the safety meetings?

4           MR. WALKER: I don't remember.

5           MR. FAWCETT: Did you ever see a Polish  
6 ship's crew member put on an immersion suit?

7           MR. WALKER: I don't remember.

8           MR. FAWCETT: That's fine. I'm asking you  
9 what you saw.

10          MR. WALKER: No, I remember everybody  
11 putting them on. I don't remember if the Polish guys  
12 were. Because it takes a lot of space to do this.

13                 Now, we have men over in the lounge putting  
14 them on, men over in the mess hall putting them on.  
15 You might even have a man out in the passageway putting  
16 them on.

17                 I put mine on in the same spot right where I  
18 eat. I don't know who put theirs on in the lounge, or  
19 who was over here on this side. It was just something  
20 I don't remember who was where and who put them on.

21                 As far as I know everybody puts them on.  
22 It's a requirement. We all put them on just to show  
23 that we're capable of putting them on.

24           MR. FAWCETT: Where was your immersion suit  
25 kept?

1 MR. WALKER: My immersion suit was kept in  
2 my locker.

3 MR. FAWCETT: And your --

4 MR. WALKER: I -- no, wait, I'm sorry. In  
5 my closet. My room was -- had a closet. The crew  
6 members had lockers. As far as I know the unlicensed  
7 members of the crew, the bosun and the electrician had  
8 closets. Mine was kept in my closet. Right by -- my  
9 closet was right next to the entrance to my room.

10 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. And on the El Faro if I  
11 couldn't -- or you couldn't get to your immersion suit  
12 where would you find an immersion suit?

13 MR. WALKER: In the emergency gear locker.

14 MR. FAWCETT: And where was that?

15 MR. WALKER: That was on the portside main  
16 deck. Underneath the house.

17 MR. FAWCETT: Was it locked or open?

18 MR. WALKER: It's a container and it had the  
19 container twists. You just lift it, twist them open.  
20 It wasn't locked with a padlock.

21 It was actually accessible to anybody that  
22 needed to get in there or wanted to get in there. You  
23 could always go over, flip the little latches and twist  
24 the two handles and the door would open.

25 MR. FAWCETT: In some previous testimony

1 somebody said the extras were in an oilskin locker that  
2 was locked.

3 MR. WALKER: No, we had lots of extras in  
4 that oilskin locker with winter coveralls. That locker  
5 was locked, padlocked.

6 MR. FAWCETT: And then just since we talked  
7 about the lifeboats, during any safety meeting, any  
8 abandon ship drills that you attended on the El Faro  
9 was there ever a discussion about how the rafts or  
10 boats would be launched with a list of the vessel or  
11 during heavy weather conditions?

12 MR. WALKER: No, I don't remember that ever  
13 coming up.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you.

15 MS. BELL: So, while we're talking about  
16 safety and emergency drills and things of that nature  
17 can you tell me if there have been any concerns -- if  
18 you have had any concerns about safety on the El Faro?

19 MR. WALKER: No, none. I don't believe so.

20 MS. BELL: And as the SIU representative  
21 were there any other people that ever brought  
22 complaints or issues to you regarding safety?

23 MR. WALKER: It was brought to my attention  
24 if I have men working with the pneumatic tools and a  
25 hole is put through the steel using the pneumatic tool

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1 that is brought to my attention immediately because  
2 that's safety.

3 Safety was brought up by the captain.  
4 Harnesses. If he saw someone not wearing a harness in  
5 a situation where he believed one was necessary they  
6 got a harness.

7 MS. BELL: So did he -- did the captain --  
8 are you talking about a specific captain?

9 MR. WALKER: Captain Davidson.

10 MS. BELL: Okay. So, he would notice if  
11 someone was not wearing a harness and would come to  
12 you?

13 MR. WALKER: Honestly, the harness thing,  
14 it's usually the rule of thumb, anything over 6 feet a  
15 person needs to wear a harness.

16 And I personally did most high work. And I  
17 had my own harness. And that was -- when Captain  
18 Davidson noticed me not wearing a harness rigging the  
19 gangway in port he called me on the radio because I  
20 have a radio in port and told me to put a harness on.  
21 And I did.

22 Went to my locker, got my harness, and I  
23 wore it. That was a rule. That was one of his rules.

24 MS. BELL: So, let's talk about him for just  
25 a minute. Would you say that he was -- adhered to the



1 rules and expected everyone else to adhere to rules  
2 relating to safety?

3 MR. WALKER: Yes. Yes, he was -- he was --  
4 when we have our radios it's always during docking or  
5 undocking. And it's always over the radio to tell.  
6 Everybody that has a radio will hear him say be safe.  
7 Take your time and be safe.

8 MS. BELL: So, compared to other captains  
9 would you say there was a difference in one over  
10 another in terms of being safe in terms of adhering to  
11 those rules?

12 MR. WALKER: No, no. I don't believe it  
13 changed from one captain to another, or one chief  
14 officer to another. Like I said, 6 feet, you wore a  
15 harness.

16 When the captain noticed that we didn't have  
17 work vests for the people, the two day men that rigged  
18 the pilot ladders coming into port or leaving port he  
19 actually sent me to the store to buy them. Because  
20 that was just a situation he believed it was necessary  
21 that the men have these on.

22 The men didn't think it was that necessary  
23 because there's wires and it's really hard to fall over  
24 the side, but the captain saw a safety issue.

25 And I did. I went to the West Marine over

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1 here at the mall and ordered four of the best safety  
2 vest work vests you could get. And I had them right  
3 there at both pilot stations.

4 MS. BELL: So, did he ever come to you to --  
5 if people that were working under you were not adhering  
6 to the rules was that something that he would notice  
7 and come to you and say so-and-so is not doing what  
8 they're supposed to do, or wearing the appropriate  
9 gear?

10 MR. WALKER: I'd have to say no. The  
11 captain doesn't come to me. I work for the chief  
12 officer. He goes to the chief officer, and if the  
13 chief officer comes to me if there's any issues.

14 The captain doesn't give me jobs 99 percent  
15 of the time. I mean, if he sees something and points a  
16 piece of trash or something he can tell me, you know,  
17 hey, do this.

18 He sees me without a safety vest and he can  
19 call me on the radio, he's going to call me. He  
20 doesn't have to call the chief officer because the  
21 chief officer has duties that he's doing. He knows I  
22 have my radio on and he saw it and I did it.

23 MS. BELL: So you report directly to the  
24 chief officer.

25 MR. WALKER: Yes.

1 MS. BELL: So, in terms of, say, performance  
2 evaluations. Would he do performance evaluations on  
3 you? Any kind of evaluation that you had done at the  
4 end of your tour?

5 MR. WALKER: The captain or the chief  
6 officer?

7 MS. BELL: The chief officer was your  
8 supervisor. Would he do performance evaluations on  
9 you?

10 MR. WALKER: As far as I know.

11 MS. BELL: Would he talk to you about those?

12 MR. WALKER: No. I -- on the ship I haven't  
13 seen an eval on myself. I've seen evals, but -- and  
14 I've been asked about evals. But I never saw mine.

15 MS. BELL: And that was never discussed with  
16 you? Your performance on the ship was never discussed  
17 with you? If you did a good job, or didn't do a good  
18 job, was that expressed to you? Either verbally or  
19 written.

20 MR. WALKER: Verbally, you know, if I did a  
21 good job, or we did something, the men did something  
22 that was done properly the chief officer would say  
23 something. You know, it's always nice.

24 And the -- I'll say the one difference  
25 between Captain Davidson and any other captain I've

1 ever met, every single time we finished undocking the  
2 ship, and it was always two men here, me and one man  
3 on the bow, and the two men at the pilot ladder.

4 He would say over the radio stay together,  
5 be safe, call me when you're in the house. Tell me  
6 when I'm finished. Secure the anchors, secure the bow  
7 for sea, stay together, call me when you get back to  
8 the house.

9 When I called him and I told him the bow was  
10 secured, the anchors were secured for sea, Captain  
11 Davidson thanked us. Told us thank you for your  
12 efforts. You did a good job. He's the only captain  
13 I've ever seen do that. Captains don't do that, but he  
14 did, every single time.

15 And I said things to other men that I can't  
16 believe this captain thanks us for doing this. It's  
17 our job. But to have somebody thank you, it's nice.  
18 It makes you feel good.

19 MS. BELL: So, I'm going to switch gears a  
20 little bit and ask you, since we're talking about the  
21 performance evaluations, you do performance evaluations  
22 on the people that you supervise, is that right?

23 MR. WALKER: No, ma'am.

24 MS. BELL: There are no performance  
25 evaluations done on them?

1 MR. WALKER: Evals are done by the chief  
2 officer.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. So you don't have to  
4 evaluate the performance of the people you're  
5 supervising?

6 MR. WALKER: If the chief officer is doing  
7 an eval and wants my opinion on how this person  
8 performs his duties he will ask me. But normally he --  
9 the chief officer does his rounds and he sees the  
10 people and the work they do. So he does the  
11 evaluations.

12 MS. BELL: Okay. And we were talking  
13 earlier about you being the SIU rep. Can you explain  
14 to me the grievance process?

15 MR. WALKER: Yes. If somebody wants -- if  
16 people want all cash at a payoff. We're talking about  
17 the captain needing to have thousands of dollars on the  
18 ship, and the captain would say that they would have to  
19 take direct deposit, or take a check, they would come  
20 to me with a grievance and I would go to the captain  
21 and talk to him.

22 I'd go to his office and talk to him, show  
23 him their contract, what it says about payoff. If a  
24 person requests all cash they are entitled to get all  
25 cash.

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1           Anytime there was -- if there was a problem  
2 I would have to go to the captain, to his office and  
3 sit down and talk about the problem, take the union  
4 contract with me. He has a copy, so. And we would  
5 talk about it. That's how it works out.

6           We have monthly union meetings. If there's  
7 grievances we bring them up and we take it to the  
8 union. The union representative comes down to the ship  
9 when we request them to and he will take it to the  
10 captain.

11           MS. BELL: And what's the difference between  
12 when you take it to the captain and when he takes it to  
13 the captain?

14           MR. WALKER: Well, we prefer to handle minor  
15 problems onboard. We don't, like, get the company or  
16 the union all worked up about just a minor problem.

17           This guy, his check didn't show up when it  
18 was supposed to show up. At a certain time they had  
19 changed payoff situations and the checks didn't show up  
20 for one extra day or something.

21           Well, somehow these guys know that their  
22 check wasn't in the bank on Tuesday when it was  
23 supposed to be. Myself, I didn't keep track like that.  
24 I know that I'm going to get paid.

25           But if -- I go to the captain and tell him

1 that so-and-so's check hasn't reached the bank yet, is  
2 there a problem. He would then call the company, or  
3 explain the message went through on this day and it'll  
4 go in on this day. And I would explain it to the crew  
5 member this is what happened.

6 MS. BELL: So, for the most part were your  
7 grievances handled without union involvement? Or did  
8 you usually have to go through that process?

9 MR. WALKER: No, the union came onboard not  
10 a lot, but they came on often. Guys would have  
11 complaints about overtime. They would complain about  
12 rest periods.

13 MS. BELL: Can you go into detail about  
14 that? Specifically rest periods as an example. What  
15 kind of complaints would they have?

16 MR. WALKER: Okay. If I'm called out to  
17 work between midnight and 6 in the morning anything I  
18 work between those hours is -- I'm entitled to -- my  
19 eight-hour day, I'm entitled to get that many hours of  
20 rest.

21 The complaints were because the men are  
22 called out. We get a 30-minute call-out. That's  
23 mandatory. You have to give me 30 minutes to get  
24 prepared to work.

25 The call-out doesn't count for rest period.

1 You call me, and this was a major problem at one point,  
2 5:30 for 6 was the call-out for the two gentlemen.  
3 They started working at 6.

4 Well, they thought they were entitled to a  
5 two-hour rest period. They worked from 6 to 8. They  
6 thought they were entitled to it.

7 And the gentleman came to me and he didn't  
8 get this overtime. Or he didn't get this rest period.

9 And I told him he's not entitled. And he  
10 wants me to go to the captain.

11 So I went to the captain and I explained to  
12 the captain he was not entitled. And this gentleman  
13 went behind my back and called the union representative  
14 because he believed he was entitled and I would not  
15 grieve the contract, the union contract that he wanted  
16 to hold in my face showing me that he was entitled.

17 The union called me, asked me why is the guy  
18 going behind my back. I explained that he's going to  
19 call anybody he can until he gets the answer he wants.

20 I know the union contract. He is not  
21 entitled. Call-out doesn't count. 5:30 for 6, that's  
22 the call-out. He's not due to go to work on deck until  
23 6 o'clock. Nothing -- from 6 on there's no rest  
24 period.

25 If he started working at 5:30, yes, he'd get



1 a two and a half hour rest period. But he didn't.

2 And the captain understood. The union --  
3 the union official in Puerto Rico on the phone told me  
4 that he had two bosuns in his office and all three of  
5 them agreed with me that he wasn't entitled.

6 And I explained to Mr. Crespo in Puerto Rico  
7 that this gentleman was going to call the vice  
8 president in charge of contracts. That would be his  
9 next phone call.

10 Because -- and that's what happens. People  
11 are going to make phone calls until they get the answer  
12 they want. They want this money, or they want this  
13 rest period.

14 And they can. I explained to the captain, I  
15 explained to the company I can't tell a person you're  
16 not allowed to use the phone. You're not allowed to  
17 call the union.

18 MS. BELL: Right.

19 MR. WALKER: They can go behind my back all  
20 they want and it happens. It happens on all ships.

21 MS. BELL: Right. So were there any -- I  
22 don't mean to belittle that specific one, but  
23 legitimate grievances that you've felt kept coming up?

24 Were there certain safety issues, or certain  
25 things that were a problem that you recognize as a

1 problem that would come up in the grievance process?

2           Someone would file a grievance and you'd  
3 say, oh yes, this has happened before. We keep getting  
4 this because it is a problem. Was there anything like  
5 that?

6           MR. WALKER: Men always complained about  
7 overtime.

8           MS. BELL: Not getting it or --

9           MR. WALKER: If they worked this much they  
10 wanted this many hours of overtime. And sometimes  
11 they're right, sometimes they're wrong.

12           The captain has -- everything is kept in the  
13 log, what time we go to work, what time we knock off.  
14 When I call in and he thanks me for doing a job well  
15 done, tell the men thank you for your efforts, when he  
16 says that we're off the clock right then.

17           Now, if we work from 12 o'clock till 12:31,  
18 well, now you get paid till 1 o'clock because you went  
19 over.

20           But everybody has got a different watch.  
21 Everybody is supposed to go by bridge time because  
22 that's what the logbook is going to show.

23           MS. BELL: Okay. I'm going to move onto --  
24 unless -- okay.

25           MS. SERRIDGE: This is Melissa Serridge with

1 TOTE Services.

2 James, can you clarify, onboard the ship do  
3 you actually have a grievance form, or is that  
4 something that the union representative would come  
5 onboard and fill out with an individual that could  
6 possibly have an issue with the contract?

7 MR. WALKER: Yes, that would be the union  
8 rep from the port.

9 MS. SERRIDGE: So, you never actually handle  
10 a person who actually filed an official grievance.  
11 Everything you've dealt with onboard is just, you know,  
12 I guess kind of issues or problems that you would work  
13 out with the captain?

14 MR. WALKER: Yes. Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. SERRIDGE: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. BELL: Thank you for clarifying that.  
17 Anyone on the phone have anything so far?

18 MR. FURUKAWA: Nothing from Jon.

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: This is Mike Kucharski. Let  
20 me go back to the very beginning. I just wanted to ask  
21 Mr. Walker --

22 MS. BELL: Mike, can you speak up a little?

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes. Mr. Walker -- maybe  
24 Jon, put your phone on mute.

25 Mr. Walker, are you the ship chairman for

1 the SIU?

2 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And do you also have  
4 a deck delegate, an engine delegate and steward  
5 department delegate that report into you?

6 MR. WALKER: We have what's called a ship's  
7 committee. I am the chairman. The steward is the  
8 secretary-treasurer. The electrician is the  
9 educational director.

10 Then you have a delegate for each  
11 department, an engine delegate, a steward delegate and  
12 a deck delegate. That is the ship's committee.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Great. Thank you.  
14 And are you the permanent bosun -- were you the  
15 permanent bosun on El Faro?

16 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: And when you talked about  
18 evaluations and the chief mate doing evaluations are  
19 you aware of making any evaluations on the unlicensed  
20 crew?

21 MR. WALKER: I don't recall.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Those are only the  
23 human elements types questions. I'll wait till you're  
24 ready to open up for other questions.

25 MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you, Mike. Kevin?

1 If you're there you're on mute. Okay, Melissa, you  
2 said you had a question?

3 MS. SERRIDGE: Yes. This is Melissa  
4 Serridge with TOTE Services again.

5 James, do you remember when signing off of a  
6 vessel is there a form that you would sign at the  
7 bottom that went over information like your leadership  
8 cooperation, attention to assigned duties, willingness  
9 to assume responsibility, that kind of thing, that  
10 would be signed by your -- the individual you reported  
11 to as well as the captain?

12 It just kind of reviewed your overall  
13 performance while on that specific tour.

14 MR. WALKER: Again, that is an evaluation  
15 sheet.

16 MS. SERRIDGE: Right.

17 MR. WALKER: And they are signed. If  
18 they've filled one out it's to be signed by the person  
19 the evaluation is done on, by the chief officer, or the  
20 department head who filled out the evaluation and the  
21 captain.

22 MS. SERRIDGE: Right. Have you ever signed  
23 one on of yourself?

24 MR. WALKER: On TOTE?

25 MS. SERRIDGE: Yes. One that was completed

1 for you.

2 MR. WALKER: I don't remember.

3 MS. SERRIDGE: Okay.

4 MS. BELL: Okay. Oh, I'm sorry.

5 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett with the Coast  
6 Guard.

7 So, Ms. Bell talked to you, like, treat her  
8 like she's a new crewman. You know, explain what you  
9 do.

10 So, in that same vein if I was walking  
11 around the deck of the ship with you and getting  
12 familiarization with the ship and I asked you had you  
13 seen like water above the watertight deck like forward  
14 of the house what would your answer be? At sea of  
15 course.

16 MR. WALKER: I don't understand.

17 MR. FAWCETT: In other words, if I said to  
18 you hey, have you ever seen seawater come over the  
19 watertight deck down below, over the deck, the  
20 watertight deck, have you seen that?

21 MR. WALKER: No. No.

22 MR. FAWCETT: Have you seen it come over the  
23 watertight deck behind the house back aft?

24 MR. WALKER: No.

25 MR. FAWCETT: Have you ever been down in the

1 holds while at sea and seen water in the holds?

2 MR. WALKER: Yes.

3 MR. FAWCETT: Could you characterize that?

4 MR. WALKER: I put the water there. The  
5 water gets there because I'm pressure washing.

6 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. How about seawater?

7 MR. WALKER: No.

8 MR. FAWCETT: And then you supervise six or  
9 seven people, but the total number of unlicensed  
10 personnel aboard is what? Just is it 15?

11 MR. WALKER: At that time I believe it was  
12 17.

13 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So, how do those seven  
14 people know where the ship's going? In other words,  
15 your union guys, your brothers and sisters are working  
16 around the ship. And the ship is going somewhere. How  
17 do you know where it's going?

18 It's going to San Juan, but how do you know  
19 what the plans are for each day?

20 MR. WALKER: I'm not informed on navigation  
21 where the course, what course we're taking. That's not  
22 in my job. Not at all. I don't know.

23 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So in late August of  
24 this year you had Hurricane Danny out there somewhere  
25 and you had Tropical Storm Erika out there somewhere.

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1           And the ship's going to depart Jacksonville.  
2           And it's going to sea.

3           So they don't inform you as the crew what  
4           the plans are and how you're going to deal with those  
5           potential storms at sea?

6           MR. WALKER: We're informed that there's  
7           going to be inclement weather and to secure everything  
8           properly. They don't inform me on which course, any  
9           navigation. I'm not kept -- that is not -- I'm not  
10          informed on that stuff at all.

11          MR. FAWCETT: So, do they inform you about  
12          securing, you know, for inclement weather and stuff?  
13          Do they have a meeting of ship's officers where they  
14          pass that word to you?

15          MR. WALKER: No, sir. They will write that  
16          on the whiteboards in both mess halls so all the  
17          officers, all the crew can see it. Everybody reads the  
18          whiteboards. That's where all your necessary  
19          information is.

20          And it will be written on the whiteboard,  
21          "Prepare for inclement weather. Secure your gear  
22          properly."

23          MR. FAWCETT: In the crew mess, on the  
24          bulletin boards, in the officer contree (phonetic)  
25          \*7:56:43 do they post a plot of the vessel's track with



1 relation to tropical weather activity so that you know  
2 what's going on?

3 MR. WALKER: No.

4 MR. FAWCETT: Do they post any other  
5 announcements with the exception of secure for  
6 inclement weather?

7 MR. WALKER: I don't understand that.

8 MR. FAWCETT: In other words, the ship has a  
9 system where they can receive weather information  
10 regarding hurricanes and other adverse weather.

11 You can print the page showing where the  
12 ship is, what the track is and where the bad stuff is.

13 Do they take that down? Do they print that  
14 and put it on the bulkheads so that you can see it as a  
15 crew member?

16 MR. WALKER: No.

17 MR. FAWCETT: Have you ever onboard the El  
18 Faro had a meeting about not secure for adverse  
19 weather, but about the actual weather? In other words  
20 wind speed you expect to encounter, sea height, this is  
21 what we're doing to make sure the ship is safe.  
22 Anything like that that you can recall on the El Faro?

23 MR. WALKER: I don't remember any meetings.  
24 I said it's posted on the whiteboard high winds. In  
25 very severe weather it will be posted no one is to go

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1 out on deck.

2 MR. FAWCETT: Have you ever seen on El Faro  
3 or El Yunque where they've, for example, double-checked  
4 or rigged for the weather like the boats, the  
5 lifeboats, or the -- like, you're heading into a  
6 hurricane. They say bosun, double-check the boats.  
7 Make sure everything is good. You know, make sure that  
8 the life rafts are properly secured. Anything like  
9 that?

10 MR. WALKER: No, that's done normally weekly  
11 at drills weather-wise or not. The boats are always  
12 checked, the rafts are checked weekly.

13 MR. FAWCETT: And then just to make sure I  
14 understand this correctly, as a member of the crew do  
15 you know what the position of the ship and what the  
16 ship's intentions are every day?

17 MR. WALKER: No. I know the ship's going  
18 from Jacksonville to Puerto Rico. That's what I know.  
19 I'm not kept in the loop as far as navigation.

20 And I'm not -- maybe it's just me, but I'm  
21 not -- I don't show any interest in that. That's not  
22 my -- that's not my -- it's not my job. My job is  
23 maintenance. Knowing where the ship is, what course  
24 they're going to take is not my job. My job is to  
25 maintain the ship and I have faith in the people that

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1 are doing their job on the bridge that we're going to  
2 go where -- to San Juan or Jacksonville.

3 MR. FAWCETT: And then just that August  
4 voyage that I spoke of coming out of Jacksonville with  
5 the hurricane and the tropical storm out there. Were  
6 you aware that the ship took a completely different  
7 route?

8 MR. WALKER: It is -- yes, I can see that.  
9 I'm not told that, but I can see that we're on this  
10 side of the Bahamas instead of this side of the  
11 Bahamas.

12 I can see -- when we're going through the  
13 Hole in the Wall I can see islands on both sides. I  
14 know we're not doing the straight course down. That's  
15 just a visual observation.

16 But I don't go up and ask why. That's the  
17 captain or the second officer's job. They make those  
18 plans, I don't. And the reasoning behind it is really  
19 not my concern.

20 I have nothing to do with anything like the  
21 navigation. And like I said, I concern myself with my  
22 job, my maintenance, keeping my men working. I don't  
23 go up and question the captain or the officers on the  
24 bridge at all. I just don't. No more than I would ask  
25 the cook why he's cooking something, or the engineers

1 why they're doing something. Everybody does their job  
2 and it's not my place to tell them how to do their job.

3 MR. FAWCETT: Did any of your unlicensed  
4 engineers ever come to you with any information about  
5 problems with the propulsion equipment?

6 MR. WALKER: No.

7 MR. FAWCETT: And was the El Faro a happy  
8 ship?

9 MR. WALKER: Sir, I'll say this. And I  
10 would expect this to be on any ship, probably any  
11 industry. There's going to be disagreements. People  
12 are going to bump heads.

13 On the ship we did. I bumped heads with  
14 men. They thought we should do something a different  
15 way and I said we should do -- but at the end of the  
16 day we were all on the same team.

17 It's just something that's normal. People  
18 are going to bump heads. It can't be -- it's never  
19 24/7 happy happy happy. People are going to disagree  
20 with other people. And everybody is going to have  
21 their own opinion and they're going to clash.

22 Like I said, at the end of the day we all  
23 have our dinner. We all sit down and talk. The men  
24 that were on the ship were mostly from the same area.  
25 They talk football. Their kids' football, the Jaguars

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1     football.

2                     But we were the -- on the same team at the  
3     end of the day. During the day they did, people bumped  
4     heads. That's normal.

5                     MR. FAWCETT: Thanks very much, James.

6                     MR. WALKER: You're welcome.

7                     MS. BELL: This is Carrie Bell again. A  
8     question about, you mentioned earlier about getting the  
9     ship Alaska-ready. So, the El Faro was going to go to  
10    Alaska.

11                    What were your plans? What were you going  
12    to do? Were you going to Alaska? Were you going on  
13    the new ships? What was your plan or TOTE's plan for  
14    you?

15                    MR. WALKER: I was supposed to join the ship  
16    last week in the shipyard and take it to Alaska and run  
17    on the ship until the ship was scrapped.

18                    MS. BELL: The El Faro.

19                    MR. WALKER: Yes, ma'am. That was my ship.

20                    MS. BELL: Did you know of any of the other  
21    -- any of your people that were planning on going to  
22    the LNG ships?

23                    MR. WALKER: No, I wasn't kept in that loop.  
24    Certain officers I believe were going. As far as  
25    unlicensed union members and my union I don't know who

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1 was going to go. Because there's certain  
2 qualifications and a lot of us didn't have them. A lot  
3 of us are in the process or were in the process of  
4 trying to get the qualifications so they could stay on  
5 that run.

6 MS. BELL: So, do you know what those  
7 qualifications are for you?

8 MR. WALKER: Well, the qualifications are --  
9 the course is tanker LG. And to take that course you  
10 have to have basic fire-fighting, an up-to-date basic  
11 fire-fighting course.

12 Last week I finished my basic fire-fighting  
13 course. Next week I will be in the tanker LG course.

14 MS. BELL: So, what is your plan then now?

15 MR. WALKER: My plan is just to find work.  
16 This incident hurt me. Those were my friends.

17 But this is what I do. I know the risks  
18 involved. I've been in super typhoons. I was on an  
19 LNG ship, that's the most volatile cargo you can carry,  
20 in port and told to leave because a super typhoon was  
21 coming. And we went out to face the super typhoon  
22 because you don't want a ship like that in port.

23 This is what I do. I can't not go back to  
24 work. That's what I'm doing. I've actually already  
25 been to the union looking for work. I need to work.

1 I want to work for TOTE. I would be happy  
2 to join one of the new ships, one of the old ships.  
3 But that's -- this is what I do. I've done it for so  
4 many years I can't remember how to do anything else.

5 MS. BELL: Thank you for that. Are you --  
6 do we need a break?

7 MR. STETTLER: I wouldn't mind five minutes.

8 MS. BELL: Okay, five minutes. Okay, five  
9 minutes. We'll be back at 25 after.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
11 off the record at 2:20 p.m. and resumed at 2:36 p.m.)

12 MS. BELL: It's 2:36. We are resuming the  
13 interview with James Walker.

14 I don't have anymore questions. I'm going  
15 to let Mike Kucharski go with the operations group.  
16 Mike, go ahead and start your questions.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, thank you. Mr.  
18 Walker, can you just give us an idea of your routine,  
19 your daily routine from, say, arrival at Jacksonville  
20 till about a day out at sea?

21 MR. WALKER: Yes. The routine was every  
22 other week we took on groceries. Every week we  
23 discharged trash.

24 Every other week we took on laundry, clean  
25 linen. We brought it on by crane, pallets at a time,

1 unloaded them, put all the stuff in the proper places  
2 and took care of any small issues.

3 If there was a broken grating it had to be  
4 repaired so the longshoreman would not get hurt. That  
5 was pretty much my day in port.

6 Leaving in port I undock the ship. I stand  
7 by the anchors until the ship is so far off of the  
8 beach. And that is always under the discretion of the  
9 captain.

10 Then it would be -- the first day out would  
11 either be securing some of the new stores that just  
12 came on, putting them in their proper place, or  
13 continuing our maintenance program. That's it.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you secure cargo for  
15 sea, or check any of the lashings first day out?

16 MR. WALKER: First day out the second  
17 officer checked the lashings. If the second officer  
18 required assistance all they would have to do is ask,  
19 but that was very rare. That was their morning work  
20 was to check lashings.

21

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And did the deck  
23 department turn on the cargo fans and turn off the  
24 cargo fans coming in and out of port?

25 MR. WALKER: Not the unlicensed.



1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you remember opening or  
2 closing any dampers, any fire dampers?

3 MR. WALKER: No.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there any dampers and  
5 vents, if you will, that had dogs on them on the second  
6 deck that the deck department opened or closed?

7 MR. WALKER: No.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you or the deck  
9 department access the holds at sea?

10 MR. WALKER: Yes.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: How did you do that?

12 MR. WALKER: Through the trunks or scuttles,  
13 however you want to call it, the round manholes.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Did you ever open up  
15 the main watertight doors at sea to run hoses or  
16 anything through there?

17 MR. WALKER: No.

18 MR. KUCHARSKI: When you washed down the  
19 holds did you ever have to de-water those areas?

20 MR. WALKER: Yes. Every time. Every time I  
21 put water in a lower hold I called the engine room  
22 personally, tell them which side, which hold needs to  
23 be pumped out. And I stood by until it was -- until  
24 the pump was sucking air and the water was gone.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Were you aware of any

1 problems with the bilge system to suck out the water?

2 MR. WALKER: No.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you get involved with  
4 the testing of the alarms at all in those holds for the  
5 bilges?

6 MR. WALKER: No.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did the deck department  
8 clean out the rose boxes to those bilges?

9 MR. WALKER: Only as needed after the chief  
10 mate -- if the chief mate put that job on the work  
11 list, the job was done.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Work list. You mentioned  
13 you were given a work list to go ahead and do things?

14 MR. WALKER: We have a monthly preventative  
15 maintenance list, four to five pages. The chief  
16 officer would walk the decks daily with me and if there  
17 was a problem, if something needed repair it was -- I  
18 was told that and I would put somebody to work on that  
19 problem.

20 Sometimes it was written. Sometimes it was  
21 just a known problem that had to be addressed.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And these monthly  
23 five-page lists, did you complete that and turn it back  
24 in to the chief officer?

25 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir. Every month.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Do you have your own  
2 workbook?

3 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you ever see -- I think  
5 this was asked, but I just want to be clear -- on the  
6 second deck on any of those ships did you ever see the  
7 green sea come onto the second deck?

8 MR. WALKER: No, sir.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there deck scuppers  
10 that were on either the main deck or second deck?

11 MR. WALKER: Yes.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: And could you tell us who  
13 opened or closed those?

14 MR. WALKER: The gentleman that worked under  
15 me, the GUDE, would close them entering Jacksonville  
16 and they would be opened after leaving Jacksonville.

17 Let me correct that. They were opened at  
18 undocking.

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Was there any list or  
20 checkoff list for that, or anything that was reported  
21 on that?

22 MR. WALKER: No. It is checked by the third  
23 officer and it is reported when they are closed.

24 MR. KUCHARSKI: You may know the design of  
25 that ship where the after deck and the forward deck,

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1 the forward part of the ship, say, on the main deck  
2 especially, they sort of have shoe (phonetic) to them  
3 where they -- from the house they rise, the fore deck  
4 rises towards the bow. And from the stern it sort of  
5 slopes back towards the house.

6 Did you notice any accumulation of water  
7 there in heavy rains?

8 MR. WALKER: The water would get so many  
9 inches deep, but it was constantly running off through  
10 the scuppers on the sides.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, so it drained back  
12 there, it drained towards the house and then went up  
13 via the scuppers?

14 MR. WALKER: Yes. The water -- rainwater  
15 runs both from the stern and the bow, runs back to the  
16 house and out of the scuppers under the house.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Did you notice any  
18 problems with the scuppers being clogged or anything  
19 like that? Is that a routine that you had to keep them  
20 open?

21 MR. WALKER: No, they were always clear.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Thank you. In your  
23 walk around the holds did you ever notice any leaks  
24 around the emergency fire pump number 3 hold?

25 MR. WALKER: Can you repeat that?

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, there's an emergency  
2 fire pump in number 3 hold, lower hold, starboard side,  
3 all the way aft. Did you ever notice any leaks in the  
4 sea chest around there or the piping?

5 MR. WALKER: No.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: In your walk about the deck  
7 at sea did you ever see the watertight doors back at  
8 the doghouse number 2 deck aft drop down after  
9 steering? Did you ever notice that door open?

10 MR. WALKER: Which door are we talking  
11 about? The door on second deck?

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Just above after steering.  
13 You drop down the lazarette there and you can get into  
14 number 5 hold from there and also into after steering.

15 MR. WALKER: Yes.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: And when it was open did you  
17 report it, or did you close it? What did you do?

18 MR. WALKER: No, that was either left open  
19 for the engineers, for access for the engineers and  
20 closed by the engineers. If doors were left open and I  
21 was told that they wanted them closed I would close  
22 them.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Okay. So if they  
24 were left open you didn't close them unless you were  
25 told to.

1 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. How about the escape  
3 hatch from the engine room just aft of the house on the  
4 second deck? Did you see that door open from time to  
5 time?

6 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, right near there  
8 there's that escape hatch house where the door is --  
9 it's just a little bit forward and maybe about 5 feet  
10 to starboard. There's a soft patch there with a whole  
11 bunch of bolts through it, putting gear into the engine  
12 room. Have you ever seen that open at sea?

13 MR. WALKER: No.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there any written  
15 instructions for heavy weather, encountering heavy  
16 weather or securing for heavy weather, preparing the  
17 vessel for heavy weather?

18 MR. WALKER: Yes, I believe, as I said  
19 before, we were instructed to secure all the gear  
20 properly. Everything had to be secured properly with  
21 rope or with ratchet straps. Everything had to be --  
22 we were told to secure for sea.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: And you were told verbally?  
24 There was nothing in writing, is that correct?

25 MR. WALKER: That's correct.

1           MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. How about any of the  
2 dogs around any of the vents? Was there any written  
3 instruction for closing any of those that would go into  
4 the deck department?

5           MR. WALKER: No.

6           MR. KUCHARSKI: You were aboard when the  
7 Polish riding crew was aboard, is that correct?

8           MR. WALKER: Yes.

9           MR. KUCHARSKI: And I understand they were  
10 preparing the ship for the Alaska trade, is that  
11 correct?

12          MR. WALKER: Yes.

13          MR. KUCHARSKI: Did they work down in the  
14 holds or in the engine room when there was inclement  
15 weather?

16          MR. WALKER: I don't remember.

17          MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there any other riding  
18 crews aboard while you were bosun?

19          MR. WALKER: On different occasions we  
20 carried a pair of workers from JMR. I believe that's  
21 Jacksonville Maritime Repair. I believe that's what  
22 they were.

23                Certain things that -- if there were certain  
24 jobs that needed to be done by them then we would carry  
25 two workers from JMR and they would do certain jobs.

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1           MR. KUCHARSKI: And the certain jobs, were  
2 they all deck department, or were they engine  
3 department also?

4           MR. WALKER: They were mainly engine  
5 department. One time they were brought onto repair the  
6 holes that the pneumatic tools put in the deck.

7           MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Were you aware of any  
8 major engine room repairs over the past two years?

9           MR. WALKER: No. I had little to no  
10 knowledge of engine room work. I mean, I could see  
11 when they were cutting pipes, or repairing -- making  
12 things to repair a handrail or something like that, but  
13 engine repairs themselves, no.

14          MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Were you aware of any  
15 tank work or tank inspections over the past two years?

16          MR. WALKER: Yes. I believe the ABS came on  
17 this year. At one point they came on and walked from  
18 one end of a tank to the forward end of the tank.

19          MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And was that up  
20 forward somewhere?

21          MR. WALKER: I don't remember. It was one  
22 of the forward holds, one of the forward three holds.  
23 But I don't remember which one exactly.

24          MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Did you perform any  
25 testing of buttons or D-rings?



1 MR. WALKER: You have to repeat that,  
2 please.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes. The buttons where the  
4 roll ox (phonetic) \*8:26:24 boxes are secured to and  
5 the D-rings or the lashings go to on the second deck  
6 for the low low cargo. And some down in the holds.  
7 But there were D-rings and there were buttons. Did you  
8 or did the deck department test any of those?

9 MR. WALKER: Yes. We freed them up if they  
10 were frozen with rust and the engineers replaced them  
11 if we were not able to free them up. Or if they were  
12 in such disrepair that they needed replacing the  
13 engineers would cut them off and replace them.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Was there any button  
15 testing type tool or machine that you used?

16 MR. WALKER: No.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were you aware of any  
18 testing program for the buttons or the D-rings?

19 MR. WALKER: No.

20 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there any problems with  
21 the lifeboat winches or davits?

22 MR. WALKER: No.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: You mentioned that you were  
24 the ship chairman. Besides the smaller items, were  
25 there any personnel-related problems reported to you by

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1 the group?

2 MR. WALKER: No. Like I said, people had  
3 disagreements. We bumped heads. It wasn't brought to  
4 my -- I would hear people arguing, but they didn't come  
5 to me to settle arguments. They settled it amongst  
6 themselves.

7 If I bumped heads with somebody I would  
8 settle it with them. I didn't have to go to the  
9 delegate. I didn't have to go to the captain. We  
10 would talk it over and decide. If they were right,  
11 they were right. If I was right, I was right. I'm not  
12 perfect.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
14 Walker. That's it. Thank you.

15 MS. BELL: Okay, we'll go around the room.  
16 Questions?

17 MR. STETTLER: Hi, Jeff Stettler from the  
18 Coast Guard. James, thank you for being here. I've  
19 got a couple of quick questions.

20 You mentioned early on that one of the  
21 things you do when the vessel gets underway is you go  
22 around and secure the trunks or the scuttles on the  
23 second deck.

24 Is there -- we're trying to resolve one  
25 question that pops up that there seems to be some

1 conflict on. Is there a scuttle on the port side of  
2 the vessel of El Faro to cargo or hold number 3?

3 MR. WALKER: No, I don't believe so.

4 MR. STETTLER: Okay. So there's just the  
5 one on the --

6 MR. WALKER: Right by the emergency fire  
7 valve.

8 (Simultaneous speaking)

9 MR. STETTLER: Okay. On the starboard side.

10 MR. WALKER: Yes, sir.

11 MR. STETTLER: Thank you. To your knowledge  
12 are those scuttles ever left open at sea other than for  
13 short periods where someone's going up or coming down?

14 MR. WALKER: That is -- and everybody  
15 understands that if you open a watertight door, when  
16 you're finished you close the watertight door.

17 We have signs at every scuttle. You flip  
18 the sign, it says "Man in the hold" and it's left open.  
19 When the man comes out of the hold he flips the sign  
20 back. He shuts and turns the wheel.

21 MR. STETTLER: Okay. Thank you. Along the  
22 second deck there's a number of dampers associated with  
23 the fire dampers and the ventilation system supply,  
24 exhaust system down to the holds.

25 Do you do maintenance as part of your

1 regular maintenance program on those dampers? The  
2 mechanisms of the dampers themselves?

3 MR. WALKER: The dampers were handled by  
4 either the engine department or the -- one of the deck  
5 officers tested them. And if they needed repair the  
6 engine department --

7 MR. STETTLER: The engineering department --

8 MR. WALKER: -- repair them.

9 MR. STETTLER: Very good, thank you.

10 Similar question to the scuttles. To your knowledge  
11 are those dampers generally left open at sea?  
12 Including the fire dampers and the ventilation supply  
13 and exhaust. Are you aware of any circumstances where  
14 those dampers may have been closed?

15 MR. WALKER: No. They were -- as far as I  
16 know they were left open.

17 MR. STETTLER: They were always left open.  
18 Okay. Thank you, that's all I have.

19 MR. GRUBER: Tom Gruber, ABS. One of the  
20 things you brought up earlier as a safety issue was  
21 when they were chipping rust, putting holes through the  
22 plating.

23 Where in general were those? In the  
24 overhead? In the deck? In the bulkheads? Where were  
25 they located and what was done when this happened?

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1 MR. WALKER: Three places, all in the  
2 forepeak. The forepeak is separated upper and lower.  
3 A pinhole on the starboard side, a pinhole on the port  
4 side, as soon as they were -- the holes were made the  
5 chipping was stopped.

6 I reported the holes immediately to the  
7 chief engineer. He got a hold of JMR because it has to  
8 be, I guess, a special welding. A special plate has to  
9 be put in.

10 The third hole was on the upper forepeak at  
11 the ladder. It was a little bit bigger hole, just more  
12 small holes. The two on the lower forepeak were two  
13 pinholes. The one on the upper forepeak were a little  
14 bit larger and I would say probably about four.

15 And again, I reported it to the chief  
16 engineer. We completed that job because that upper  
17 forepeak did not go down into a tank. The lower  
18 forepeak, because the holes were above a tank, I  
19 believe the chain locker, they had to be taken care of  
20 immediately.

21 The other one on the upper forepeak because  
22 it just -- if water was to come in would just go into  
23 the lower forepeak.

24 We completed that job and then they repaired  
25 it. But it was repaired.

1           MR. GRUBER: It was repaired on a future  
2 trip. Not -- you had to wait for somebody to come  
3 onboard to do that.

4           MR. WALKER: I don't remember when they came  
5 onboard. The ones in the lower one, like I said, that  
6 was something that was handled as soon as possible.

7           The upper one wasn't as critical and they  
8 let me complete the job of chipping that deck and then  
9 repaired the holes.

10          MR. GRUBER: Okay. You also said before one  
11 of your jobs was to close the deck scuppers coming into  
12 Jacksonville. On which deck were these scuppers?

13          MR. WALKER: We're talking the scuppers --  
14 not the trunks that go down, but the scuppers that go  
15 up?

16          Yes, coming into Jacksonville we take on  
17 fuel. Those scuppers have to be closed because if  
18 there's a fuel leak we don't want oil going into the  
19 ocean. We want it contained.

20          They're closed at arrival. When the two  
21 gentlemen prepare the pilot ladder to take the pilot  
22 onboard coming into Jacksonville the goody (phonetic)  
23 \*8:35:42 goes around and closes every single one,  
24 reports to me.

25          The third mate checks. Before the bunker

1 barge is tied he checks and makes sure that all the  
2 scuppers are in good.

3 MR. GRUBER: Which deck are these on? Are  
4 these on --

5 MR. WALKER: Second deck.

6 MR. GRUBER: Second deck. What size  
7 scuppers are these and how are they closed?

8 MR. WALKER: They are -- I'd say they're  
9 half-moon about 6 inches long. They're closed with  
10 wooden plates that slide down into grooves with oil-  
11 absorbent padding as the wood is covered with oil-  
12 absorbent padding and put down to stop the oil.

13 MR. GRUBER: And who verifies that they're  
14 opened up again once the fueling is stopped?

15 MR. WALKER: The third mate.

16 MR. GRUBER: All right. Thank you, sir.

17 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: I have no questions.

18 MR. RICHARDS: No questions.

19 MS. SERRIDGE: None.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm all set.

21 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett. So, you got on  
22 in May for the last trip on there. And they had a deck  
23 cadet and an engine cadet. So, did the deck cadet come  
24 to you to see what you did and understand the role and  
25 job of the bosun?

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1           MR. WALKER: Yes, sir. Actually, the deck  
2 cadet would do maintenance.

3           I am allowed to work the deck cadet as long  
4 as there's work for the unlicensed crew. If overtime  
5 is not available to the crew I cannot work a deck  
6 cadet. The workers can't come on and do work that is  
7 traditionally our work.

8           But because we did have overtime I did put  
9 the deck cadet to work. I let him do many jobs to show  
10 him the different jobs that he would have to know.

11          MR. FAWCETT: And did he present you ever  
12 with some kind of sign-off sheet, or checkoff sheet to  
13 show that he was accomplishing his training aboard?

14          MR. WALKER: Yes, I believe he came to me  
15 with -- they come on with a project, their sea project.  
16 And I believe he came to me and asked me questions  
17 about certain areas of the ship.

18          I always taught him the knots that they  
19 would need to know. I gave him the tools and knowledge  
20 of how to do deck work.

21          MR. FAWCETT: John had mentioned --  
22 Ringlein, the deck cadet, that there was one time they  
23 were having ballast, they were ballasting, and there  
24 was a reach rod that went into the ballast tank that  
25 didn't work properly.

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1 Do you recall what he might have been  
2 talking about?

3 MR. WALKER: Yes. There was a reach rod in  
4 one of the forward tanks that had come unpinned.

5 MR. FAWCETT: And you guys fixed it?

6 MR. WALKER: My job was to put all the gear  
7 together for entering a tank. There's a proper  
8 procedure, a checkoff list for the gear needed to go  
9 into a tank.

10 I have to unbutton the manhole and put in  
11 blowers to put fresh air in. And it's tested for the  
12 quality of air. And then the engineer goes in and he  
13 did fix it.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Sometime during the  
15 voyage too, the same voyage we were talking about that  
16 you were onboard, Coast Guard ship riders came onboard.  
17 There was a female lieutenant JG and a couple of petty  
18 officers.

19 Do they come to you similarly to the -- I  
20 know they didn't work, but I mean did they come to you  
21 and ask you what you did and have you sign any kind of  
22 checkoff sheet or anything like that?

23 MR. WALKER: No, I don't remember the Coast  
24 Guard youngsters coming to me for information.

25 MR. FAWCETT: Do you recall just offhand how

1 long they were aboard approximately?

2 MR. WALKER: No, I don't remember at all.

3 MR. FAWCETT: Was the presence of the cadets  
4 or the Coast Guard ship riders in your opinion  
5 disruptive to the crew in any way?

6 MR. WALKER: Not at all.

7 MR. FAWCETT: Did it change any of your  
8 usual routines? In other words, did you all, as crew  
9 members, did you socialize in the common areas usually  
10 without the ship riders aboard, or without the cadets  
11 aboard? Did you usually socialize, like around the  
12 mess deck, and the lounge, and so forth?

13 MR. WALKER: Crew members would -- we all  
14 had televisions in our rooms. Sometimes if we were  
15 close enough, we had a television in our lounge, the  
16 guys would sit and watch a football game. Or they  
17 would sit at the table in the lounge and play cards, or  
18 play dominoes.

19 Myself, I did not socialize like that.  
20 Typically at the end of my day I went out to a chair I  
21 had set up on the galley deck and smoked my cigar. Or  
22 I went to the bridge if the one chief officer Thompson,  
23 if he was aboard I would go up to the bridge and we  
24 would both smoke a cigar.

25 MR. FAWCETT: I can actually picture you

1 sitting in your chair having a cigar.

2 MR. WALKER: It's my one vice. I gave up  
3 cigarettes and drinking and picked up cigars.

4 MR. FAWCETT: So, I just want to make sure.  
5 The routine for, like, the socialization, or the  
6 interaction with the crew would watch TV if they were  
7 within reception range.

8 Did you guys have movies onboard?

9 MR. WALKER: Yes.

10 MR. FAWCETT: So, you had like a library of  
11 movies and stuff? You could all watch Rambo and all  
12 that kind of stuff?

13 MR. WALKER: Yes.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Did that routine change at all  
15 with the ship riders or the cadets aboard?

16 MR. WALKER: Not at all.

17 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Thank you very much.

18 MS. BELL: I don't have anymore questions.  
19 I'll do another -- oh, let me check with the people  
20 online. Anybody on the phone have questions?

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Nothing from Jon.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: This is Mike. Thank you.

23 MR. STITH: Nothing from Kevin.

24 MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you. Around the  
25 room?

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1 MR. GRUBER: Yes. Tom Gruber, ABS. Just to  
2 go back and revisit the repair work that was done in  
3 the upper and lower forepeak.

4 Do you know if ABS or the Coast Guard was  
5 advised of the repairs?

6 MR. WALKER: I don't know.

7 MR. GRUBER: And do you know any of the  
8 details of the plate size, the welding procedures, or  
9 whether or not it was gauged?

10 MR. WALKER: No, sir. My responsibility is  
11 to report it immediately. I did what I was -- I did my  
12 job. I reported it immediately. And from there on  
13 it's in somebody else's hands, I believe the chief  
14 engineer's.

15 MR. GRUBER: I understand. Thank you very  
16 much.

17 MR. FAWCETT: I have another follow-up about  
18 the use of pneumatic tools. Following the pinholes and  
19 the area for that lower forepeak.

20 When they talked about, you know, be careful  
21 with the pneumatic tools, were there any particular  
22 areas of the ship they said you have to use more care  
23 than others? Or was it just a general, hey, be careful  
24 when you use pneumatic tools?

25 MR. WALKER: No, it was if we made a pinhole

1 -- when we made the pinhole in the forepeak the deck  
2 work stopped. We went onto the upper forepeak and  
3 started chipping up there. But that job was stopped.

4 MR. FAWCETT: And was that in writing? Did  
5 somebody -- the precautions with pneumatic tools, did  
6 someone put that in a written form?

7 MR. WALKER: I don't believe so.

8 MR. FAWCETT: Thanks very much, James.

9 MS. BELL: I think that concludes the  
10 questions for this interview. Thank you very much for  
11 your time. It is 3:15.

12 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
13 off the record at 3:15 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: El Faro Incident  
October 1, 2015  
NTSB Accident No. DCA16MM001  
Interview of James Walker

DATE: 12-03-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 70 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the court reporter.

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TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR  
JAMES WALKER  
TAKEN ON  
DECEMBER 3, 2015

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
40	24	contree (phonetic)	country
57	4	roll ox	roloc
62	22	goody (phonetic)	GUDE

JAMES K. WALKER

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

[REDACTED]

Signature of Person providing the above information

12/28/15

Date

December 28, 2015

Lee Peterson  
TOTE Services

SUBJECT: Supplement to witness interview of James Walker conducted on December 3, 2015

I am contacting you as the TOTE Services' Party Coordinator and Party Representative in connection with the NTSB El Faro accident investigation, NTSB Accident No.

DCA16MM001. Please forward this e-mail to the appropriate NTSB investigative Group Chairpersons.

Upon reviewing the transcript of my interview taken on December 3, 2015 and upon further reflection, I noted two matters matter requiring correction.

On page 54, at lines 14 through 25, I was asked if the crew members ever received written instruction relating to heavy weather. I responded affirmatively to a question from Investigator Kucharsky that suggested the crew received no written instruction (only verbal) regarding anticipated heavy weather. The crew did receive written instruction. As I had already testified on page 40, at lines 15 through 22, the crew did receive written instruction to prepare for such items as heavy weather through postings on the white boards located in the mess halls.

On page 63, line 15 I indicated that the Third Mate verified that the wooden scuppers were removed at the conclusion of fueling. In fact, I am not certain who verifies removal of the wooden scupper after fueling.

Please note this correction in your investigative record.

James Walker

[REDACTED] 12/28/15

THIS IS FINE